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1. (Amended) A water based ink composition for a ballpoint pen which comprises [an alkali-swelling associative] a thickener which swells in an alkaline medium, said thickener comprising a polymer having a carboxyl group and a hydrophobic group, a pigment, a polar solvent [containing] comprising water and other solvents and a pH controlling agent.

2. (Amended) The water based ink composition for a ballpoint pen as described in claim 1, wherein the [alkali-swelling associative] thickener is contained in a proportion of 0.1 to 8% by weight [(polymer component)] based on the ink composition and dissolves and swells [in an alkaline area] in the polar solvent [containing water] to associate with the particle surface of the pigment, thereby increasing the ink viscosity. in an alkaline medium

### REMARKS

Reconsideration of this application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

#### **I. Status of the Claims**

Claims 1-4 are pending. Claims 1 and 2 are amended to overcome rejections under 35 U.S.C. §112. No new matter is added by these amendments.